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PER
United States Department of State

Under Secretary of State
for Global Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520-7250

October 13, 1994

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The File

FROM: G - Anthony W. Gambino *AWG*

SUBJECT: Under Secretary Wirth's Briefing for
Nongovernmental Organizations on the Situation
in Rwanda and Burundi

This memo summarizes the points made by the nongovernmental organizations who attended the October 11 briefing on Rwanda and Burundi hosted by Under Secretary Wirth.

Under Secretary Wirth, joined by Assistant Secretaries Moose, Oakley and Shattuck briefed a group of fourteen representatives of nongovernmental organizations which are active in or working on the humanitarian situation in Rwanda and Burundi. Representatives attended from Interaction, Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, the International Human Rights Law Group, the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, CARE, Oxfam, the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Refugees International, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Lutheran World Relief, World Vision and International Action Against Hunger. Rwanda was the focus, with some discussion of the situation in Burundi and the camps in Zaire as well as the status of preparations for a War Crimes Tribunal.

After opening remarks on the present situation from Under Secretary Wirth and Assistant Secretaries Oakley and Shattuck, Under Secretary Wirth asked if all the NGO representatives present agreed that one had little alternative but to support the present Government of Rwanda. All who spoke agreed; no one disagreed.

Two NGO representatives brought up the Gersony allegations. After discussion, it appeared that most, if not all, the NGOs represented agreed that, even with the Gersony report, the international community should support

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the present Government. In this context, most of the NGO representatives seemed to support present efforts to explore whether an expanded UNAMIR could effectively help create a situation under which representation from Zaire to Rwanda could be accelerated.

Discussion then centered around how such support should be shown. NGOs stressed that the US should provide resources, including money, to the new Government.

The NGOs were dismayed by the slowness of the UN effort to place human rights monitors in the field, to the point that a group of European NGOs had recently proposed that U.S. and European NGOs put together a parallel NGO effort to get their own human rights monitors in the field. U.S. NGOs are taking this idea seriously, and considering what actions they should take.

In response to questions from Assistant Secretary Oakley, the group agreed that a regional donors' conference was a good idea; that it should not be organized by the OAU; and that holding it in Burundi made sense. They also agreed with her that NGO coordination in Kigali needed improvement; that they were seized of this issue, and would take steps to correct present deficiencies.

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